

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 AID-20

PC-04 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 DRC-01 /105 W

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O P 050035Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2330

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 1251

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GT

SUBJECT: ELECTION REPORT NUMBER 9

1. AFTERNOON MARCH 4 DCG ORGANIZATION SECRETARY VINICIO CEREZO TOLD EMBOFFS DURING MEETING HELD AT HIS REQUEST THAT OPPOSITION FRONT NOW CONVINCED RIOS HAS WON PRESIDENTIAL RACE. CEREZO GAVE US COPY OF DCG VOTE TABULATION SHOWING FOLLOWING PARTIAL RESULTS AS OF NOON: RIOS-144,366; LAUGERUD-95,923; PAIZ-50,034. PARTIAL COUNT IN 21 ELECTORAL DISTRICTS SHOWED RIOS LEADING IN CAPITAL, GUATEMALA DEPT., SAN MARCOS, HEUHETENANGO, QUEZALTENANGO, SUCHITEPEQUEZ AND TEN OTHER DEPARTMENTS. CEREZO EXPRESSED PARTICULAR SATISFACTION WITH RIOS' REPORTED VICTORY IN SUCH COALITION STRONGHOLDS AS SACATAPEQUEZ AND THE CITY OF ZACAPA. THE DCG LEADER EMPHASIZED THAT THE PARTY'S COUNT WAS BASED ON VOTING TABLE DOCUMENTS (ACTAS) WHICH, ACCORDING TO ELECTORAL LAW, MUST BE GIVEN TO REPRESENTATIVES OF EACH PARTY.

2. EXPLAINING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM DCG LEADER RENE DE LEON SCHLOTTER, CEREZO SAID OPPOSITION FRONT WAS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE GOG ATTEMPT TO CHEAT THEM OUT OF ELECTION VICTORY. CEREZO EXPLAINED THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAD NOTED SEVERAL SUSPICIOUS ACTIONS ON PART OF GOVERNMENT: FOOT-DRAGGING IN REPORTING RESULTS; SECLECTIVE

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REPORTING OF RESULTS FAVORABLE TO COALITION; DOUBLE-REPORTING

BY COALITION MAYORS WHO HAVE CABLED FALSE RESULTS TO ELECTORAL REGISTRY AND REAL TOTALS TO LAUGERUD'S HOME; ELECTORAL COUNCIL TACTICS DESIGNED TO HOLD UP REPORTING OF GUATEMALA CITY RETURNS.

3. CEREZO STATED MANY FRONT SYMPATHIZERS WERE READY TO TAKE TO THE STREETS TO DEMAND RECOGNITION OF RIOS' ELECTION, BUT PARTY LEADERS HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN RESTRAINING FOLLOWERS. THE DCG LEADER ASKED THE AMERICAN EMBASSY TO USE ITS CONTACTS AND INFLUENCE WITH GOVERNMENT LEADERS TO HELP ENSURE GOG RESPECT FOR RIOS' VICTORY.

4. EMBOFFS REPLIED THAT WHILE U.S. COULD NOT INTERFERE IN INTERNAL POLITICAL PROCESSES IN GUATEMALA, WE DO BELIEVE IT IN BEST INTEREST OF BOTH OUR COUNTRIES THAT THE CANDIDATE WHO WINS ELECTION BE PERMITTED TO ASSUME OFFICE. WE PROMISED TO MAKE THAT POINT WHEN APPROPRIATE IN CONVERSATIONS WITH ALL CONCERNED. EMBOFFS COMMENTED THAT ANY STREET DEMONSTRATIONS BY OPPOSITION FRONT WOULD RISK CONFRONTATION WHICH COULD BE USED AS PRETEXT TO NULLIFY ELECTION RESULTS AND OPINED THAT PLACING EMPHASIS ON PRESIDENT'S AND ARMY'S GUARANTEE TO RESPECT RESULT OF ELECTIONS WAS FRONT'S BEST TACTIC. CEREZO EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF DANGERS OF DEMONSTRATIONS, WHICH HE SAID FRONT WOULD NOT MOUNT UNLESS "LEFT NO ALTERNATIVE." HE THANKED US FOR ANY HELP WHICH EMBASSY COULD OFFER IN ENSURING GOG RESPECT FOR DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

5. COMMENT: DOCG'S TALLY REPRESENTS 35 PER CENT OF EMBASSY'S PROJECTED TOTAL VOTE. IN VIEW OF GOG'S OBVIOUS RELUCTANCE TO RELEASE DATA AND DCG'S USUAL METICULOUSNESS IN SUCH CALCULATIONS, WE BELIEVE PARTY'S TABULATION MAY REPRESENT A REAL VOTING TREND IN FAVOR OF RIOS. IF DCG IS CORRECT IN ALLEGATION THAT FALSE RESULTS HAVE BEEN CABLED FROM MANY TOWNS, THERE COULD BE A LONG INVOLVED SERIES OF DISPUTES. IF GOG DOES NOT RELEASE FAIRLY COMPLETE RETURNS SOON, FRONT SUPPORTERS ARE LIKELY BECOME INCREASINGLY EDGY AND MORE INSISTENT ON DEMONSTRATING TO ASSURE RECOGNITION OF WHAT THEY ARE SURE IS RIOS' VICTORY. CONTINUED PROLONGED GOG WITHHOLDING OF SIGNIFICANT ELECTION FIGURES COULD ALSO AROUSE SUSPICIONS OF GENERAL PUBLIC AND SITUATION COULD BECOME INCREASINGLY TENSE, WITH LIKELIHOOD OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS. CONFIDENTIAL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, NATIONAL ELECTIONS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974GUATEM01251
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740368/aaaacldcm.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 SEP 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <03 JAN 2003 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ELECTION REPORT NUMBER 9
TAGS: PINT, GT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005